



# **Building and Maintaining Customer/Contractor Relationships**

**Kirk Grothe**

CIO, Department of Human Resources  
*Maryland's Human Services Agency*

# Agenda

- Getting Started
- Multiple State Procurement Methods
- Considerations for Selecting Procurement Methods
- The Intent for All Procurements is Full and Open Competition
- Achieving Success
- Know the Customer
- Maintaining Good Relationships
  - With Customers and Business Partners

## Getting Started

- Today's focus is on the Executive Branch agencies
- Identify agencies that align with your core competencies
- Study the State's capital and operating budgets
- Study the agencies' IT Master Plans
- Understand that government customers have long sales cycles

# Multiple State Procurement Methods

- Master Contract
  - Task Order driven (CATS)
- Request for Proposal
- Invitation for Bid (IFB)
- Blanket Purchase Contract
  - Desktop 20/20

# Considerations For Selecting Procurement Method

- Policy requirements
- Fit of contract to need
- Uniqueness of good or service
- Unique needs of the agency
- Maximize competition
- Services versus products
- Solution versus service

# The Intent for All Procurements is Full and Open Competition

- Incumbency can be both an advantage and a disadvantage
- The procurement process is designed to increase fairness for the contractor community and match need to capacity
- The reality is that some companies will be more qualified than others for each opportunity
- Each procurement has it's own nuances
- Prior submittal results have no impact on new opportunities
- Keep trying

## Achieving Success

- Target agencies and opportunities
  - Submit proposals to only those TORFPs with requirements that you can satisfy
  - Focus your resources on quality proposals
- Team with companies with successful track records doing business with the State
- Team with other companies to fill out your company's skill sets
- Know the customer

## Know the Customer

- Agency will listen to your presentation
- Agency will accept your marketing materials, if they are general in nature
- It's a learning session for both parties
- You will NOT get an offer for business or any specific information about the agency's procurement plans that is not available to the business community at large
- Listen to the agency's needs



# Maintaining A Good Customer Relationship

- Respect the roles
  - State employees are stewards of public funds
  - We procure goods and services on behalf of the State to serve our customers
- Keep the State informed of what you can and cannot do
- Keep your expectations realistic
- Provide frequent and accurate information
  - Both good and bad
- Stay diligent
- Deliver what you signed up for
  - On time, on budget, within scope

# Maintaining a Good Business Partner Relationship

- Write a clear Scope of Work
  - Leave nothing open to interpretation
- Manage change formally
  - Change orders/work orders
  - Vision and mission
  - Scope
- If you sign off on it, you own it

## Maintaining a Good Business Partner Relationship (cont.)

- Keep in mind that contractors provide goods and services as outlined in the Scope of Work, no more, no less
  - Don't expect something for nothing
- The State has an equal responsibility to communicate with contractors and stay on track with deliverables for which they are responsible
  - No hurry up and wait
- Proactively manage risk and communication

**Thank You!**